

**SITUATION REPORT NO. 1**  
**INCIDENT NO. 2004-121**  
**DATE: October 11, 2004 Time 4:30 p.m.**

**TO:** Governor John Hoeven  
State Capitol  
Bismarck ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Sodium cyanide barrels – On 9/30/04 two barrels of sodium cyanide were found and on 10/1/04 another was reported missing.
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: No deaths or injuries have been reported.
3. DAMAGES: A barrel of sodium cyanide, a highly toxic chemical, was found one mile north of Lawton along N.D. Highway 1. A second barrel was found in the west ditch of N.D. Highway 1 one and a half miles north of Lakota. A third barrel of the toxic chemical was later reported missing. The barrels fell from a trailer during transport. Officials are concentrating search efforts for the third barrel along N.D. Highway 1 and Ramsey County Highway 17 in an area between Lakota and Langdon. There are concerns that there are no state regulations governing use of sodium cyanide in North Dakota or the use of placards in its transportation. There are no indications—i.e., a preponderance of dead wildlife --that the chemical in the missing keg has been released.
4. RESOURCES:  
LOCAL: Ramsey County Emergency Manager, Ramsey County Sheriff's Department, Cavalier County Sheriff's Department, Nelson County Sheriff's Department, Devils Lake Fire Department, Devils Lake Rural Fire Department, Ramsey County Highway Department, Nelson County Emergency Manager, Ramsey County District Health Unit.  
STATE: Governor's Office, N.D. Department of Agriculture, N.D. Highway Patrol, N.D. Division of Emergency Management/State Radio, Bureau of Criminal Investigation, N.D. Department of Transportation, N.D. National Guard, N.D. Game and Fish Department, N.D. Department of Health, N.D. Fire Marshal, Information Analysis Fusion Cell.  
FEDERAL: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Homeland Security, N.D./Canada Ports of Entry, Customs and Immigration.
5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: Lake Region Search and Rescue is expected to help conduct a search of ditches.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: The Department of Agriculture along with Ramsey County Sheriff's Department plans to concentrate a search effort on 10/12/04 between Bocket and Lawton along N.D. Highway 1 and Ramsey County Highway 17. Searchers will be using waders and ATVs to check sloughs covered with vegetation. Lake Region Search and Rescue is expected to begin a search of sloughs in an area between Bocket and Lawton this week. There is concern the barrel of cyanide may have fallen into a roadside ditch filled with water.

The Department of Agriculture has located all but one of 18 sodium cyanide kegs sold in 2004 by a North Dakota chemical distributor. It is now conducting a search for kegs sold in 2003, searching for any chemical distributors who may have sold sodium cyanide. Records indicate 36 kegs were sold in 2003 and nearly all have been found, and most are intact. Once the Department of Agriculture finds a keg of the sodium cyanide, the container is sealed and tagged "not for sale or distribution." The owner of the keg is not allowed to move it. Once the investigation into the sale of the chemical is complete the Department of Agriculture will properly dispose of the sodium cyanide.

The incident was well publicized by the media and area residents have been alerted as to the dangerous nature of the missing barrel's contents, to keep clear of the barrel, and whom to contact should they come across the barrel.

State and local transportation employees have will keep an eye out for the barrel as they do routine highway and ditch maintenance.

Responders conducted searches between Langdon and Lakota for the missing sodium cyanide barrel including flyovers by the National Guard, Highway Patrol and Department of Transportation. Area Sheriff's Offices, Highway Patrol and Department of Transportation have conducted drive-by and walking searches of the ditches in the area — particularly those areas which flyovers indicated they didn't have a good view.

The product, sodium cyanide, is used in bee-keeping operations.

The makers of the chemical, Dupont Chemical, were contacted and provided information concerning the sodium cyanide.

The Devils Lake Fire Department secured and stored the found barrels.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: The National Guard performed a helicopter fly-over of the area on 10/1/04 at the request of Ramsey County.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No outside assistance has been requested.
9. OTHER INFORMATION: The N.D. Division of Emergency Management's Situation Reports are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is <http://www.state.nd.us/dem>.

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Douglas C. Friez, State Director